

---

**Appropriations Committee  
Friday, March 18, 2022**

**Senate Bill 9: AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS  
FOR GENERAL GOVERNMENT - Oppose Sections 5 & 6**

**Senate Bill 111: AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING FOR CHILD CARE PROGRAMS - Support**

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France, and members of the Appropriations Committee:

My name is Travis Woodward, I am a resident of Hamden, and an engineer in the Connecticut Department of Transportation. I am also the president of CSEA SEIU Local 2001, a labor union representing over 23,000 state, municipal, board of education, active and retired, public and private sector workers, including the engineers and other transportation professionals in the Connecticut Department of Transportation. On behalf of our members, I offer the following testimony in opposition to Senate Bill 9: AN ACT IMPLEMENTING THE GOVERNOR'S BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS FOR GENERAL GOVERNMENT, specifically Sections 5 & 6 and in support of Senate Bill 111: AN ACT CONCERNING FUNDING FOR CHILD CARE PROGRAMS:

In the aftermath of the infamous I-84 drainage to nowhere, CSEA members were instrumental in the formation of the State Contracting Standards Board. Whether you are an engineer like me, or an information technology professional or an environmental analyst or any other state employee, you've seen the waste that often comes when work is contracted out.

The State Contracting Standards Board is our state's frontline contracting watchdog. It can put a stop to the waste, but only if it is allowed to do its job. By evaluating contracts, conducting and reviewing cost-benefits analyses, having the authority to nullify bad contracts, and all the other work the Board performs, it is uniquely positioned to protect taxpayer dollars and help ensure the effective and efficient delivery of critical state services.

Sections 5 and 6 of Senate Bill 9, however, seek to neuter the Board's authority. Section 5 gives the state auditors the new responsibility of auditing state contracting agencies "for compliance with provisions of statutes and regulations concerning procurement and may periodically review the procurement processes of each such state contracting agency." This is exactly the type of work the Board was created to do and, even with its inadequate funding, has been doing for years.

While Section 6 specifically takes away the Contracting Standards Board's responsibilities for investigation and instead seeks to have the auditors investigate deficiencies in contracting and procurement. Current statute (4e-6) already provides for the ability of the Contracting Standards Board and the auditors to work together. So how will any of the proposed changes in Sections 5 & 6 help improve Connecticut's contract and procurement oversight functions?

The State Auditors of Public Accounts do great work. However, the work they do looks back after contracts have been signed and work has been completed. Their area of focus and scope of work is completely different from the Contracting Standards Board. Sections 5 & 6 will not enhance the work of the Contracting Standards Board, but just the opposite. I urge you to say “No” to the proposed changes in Sections 5 & 6 of Senate Bill 9.

Among the diverse membership of CSEA are thousands of family childcare providers serving the children of parents who receive a subsidy from the Care 4 Kids program. The providers were essential workers long before any pandemic, but over the past two years these dedicated people never closed their doors and never stopped caring for and educating our state’s children. Their commitment and sacrifice allow parents to go to work knowing their children are in a safe and nurturing environment.

Like too many essential workers, their compensation falls far short of where it should. However, the reality is that Connecticut needs many more childcare providers. As things stand now under current funding and payment structures, we will not be able to attract or retain enough people to do this much needed work. Senate Bill 111 will start moving our state in the right direction by appropriating enough money to the Office of Early Childhood to properly fund Connecticut’s child care needs. We advocate for that funding to be set at \$700 million.

When you support childcare providers, you are supporting the parents they serve and the children for whom they care. You are also supporting the businesses where these moms and dads work. And, ultimately, you are supporting a stronger and more prosperous Connecticut. I urge you to vote for Senate Bill 111.

I would like to thank you for hearing my testimony.

Travis Woodward  
President, CSEA SEIU Local 2001